

CAPT. CLARK'S PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY DAYS

In the relation of tales of pioneer days by Capt. W. L. Clark, of Buffalo, Iowa, before the Andalusia Memorial association last Tuesday evening the younger generation who heard him had an opportunity which in all likelihood few of them will have again of hearing at first hand the story of the hardy people who three-quarters of a century ago came to subdue the unbroken wilds that then constituted this part of the northwest.

As merely an experience it is unique to hear one talk who saw things as they were in that time that seems so long ago to the average person. To the young or the middle aged who have been born and raised here the civilization of Rock Island county seems a respectably ancient thing—associated as it were, with the very hills and the familiar old Mississippi. But for a man in the full possession of his faculties to tell of having lived and toiled here when our grandfathers were boys in some far off state or country, when the gnarled old trees that we know of in the forests were saplings, when there were no cities, towns, railways or even wagon roads, nothing, in fact that we now see except the rugged hills and the Father of Waters, and the Indians still hunted and fished in their wild state; hearing these things told of as we are accustomed to tell of Rock Island when there were no paved streets or the building of the first pavilion on the brow of Black Hawk Watch Tower, seems incredible.

Is Remarkable Man.
And what a man is Capt. Clark. Where is there another like him? How many of us will be 50 years hence as he is now, vigorous, erect, quick to hear and see and with a memory that still holds in firm grasp places and dates, names, faces and manner of speech of happenings and people of the present day? But Capt. Clark does not live in the past, highly as he prizes the associations of his youth and early manhood. He takes a keen interest in present day affairs and is as ready to converse about them as he is about those of 50, 60 or 70 years ago.

Much of our local history, Capt. Clark tells us, has been badly written and much more has not been written at all. Too often that which has been recorded has been devoted to particular persons and things, as the pecuniary interests of the writer led him. Yet Capt. Clark does not feel that it is his mission to controvert where he has been asked to do so and where he has facts at his command to leave no room for doubt. He does not ask that his memory be accepted unsupported as against that which the mysterious power of ink and type has made gospel in the mind of the average person.

In the preparation of historical matter in Rock Island county for many years the memory of the late Benjamin Coble was relied upon implicitly. Mr. Coble was a wonderful man and he did great service in recalling incidents of the pioneer days. He came here in 1829. Capt. Clark had spent two winters here at that time.

GOES BACK TO THE YEAR 1827.
Interestingly written Account of Early Struggles of Pioneer Settlers.

At Andalusia Tuesday evening Capt. Clark presented a manuscript to become part of the records of the Memorial association dealing with the early settlement of Andalusia in the following language:

"I take quite an interest in old times, and history, and hope you will not think me boastful when saying that I know more about the early settlement of Rock Island county and your neighborhood, and people than anyone else now living. My father's family settling where the city of Rock Island now is in the summer of 1827. I will begin by quoting a few lines from an article taken from an old newspaper:

"There were scant postal facilities in 1827, when the boy Clark (myself) first went upon the island (Fort Armstrong). Mail was obtained from Galena, about 100 miles away, by sending two soldiers on foot to that place. The news of President Jackson's election in 1828 was not received until late in December, although the election had taken place in August, and then by messenger service, the messenger being the Hon. John W. Spencer, requiring a week for the trip."

"My father built, in 1828, a double log house on the river bank, near where the wagon bridge from the island strikes the Rock Island shore, which stood there until after the completion of the C. R. I. & P. railroad, in 1854. No doubt many old citizens of Rock Island will remember it."

Davenport First White.

"The first paleface I remember seeing, outside of my own family, was George Davenport. He was the first white settler in the vicinity of Rock Island. There were three Davenport families, not at all connected—all living on Rock Island—the others being George Marmaduke and Col. William Davenport. One was the George I have just named, the Indian trader, located where the old trading house still remains on the government island. Him I remember very well. He was a man of medium height, 5 feet 5

inches, squarely built, inclined to fleshy, florid of face, light complexion; a typical Englishman; wore long hair hanging down his back, which made a vivid impression upon my youthful mind. The first time I saw him he was lying back, his hair floating in the water, while he steered a canoe an Indian was paddling.

"The next, during 1835 or '36, was Col. William Davenport, of the U. S. army, stationed at Fort Armstrong, in command. This was the man for whom the city of Davenport was named, he being the only Col. Davenport. Yet people seem to have gotten the impression that the trader, George, was a colonel, which he never was, and, as I said, the city was named for Col. William Davenport.

"Earlier still (in the '30's), Marmaduke Davenport, the Indian agent, settled on Rock Island in 1832, and afterwards on Credit Island, and was the father of Capt. A. H. Davenport, of Le Claire.

Life in '27, '28 and '29.

"Life during 1827, 1828 and 1829 was vexed by many obstacles. The first of these three years I spent in sight of Davenport, with occasional trips across the river, remembering well when there was no white family on the Iowa side. The next year, 1828, trade opened with the Indians across the river. A buck came over and wanted to sell a pony. My father went to the Iowa side, taking me with him, and bought the pony. "Do you ask how the Indian delivered the pony to the Illinois side? He took a rawhide lasso, tied it around the pony's neck, and the Indian paddled across the river, taking his time to do so, and the pony swam where he could not walk. The spot of starting was about the foot of Brady street, landing about where Eighteenth street is at Rock Island.

"In the year 1828 Hon. John W. Spencer, John Brasher and William Carr came; and in the spring of 1829 Judge Pense and family, Wallis Pense, Henry Wells and family, all of whom were frightened away by the Indians and Indian traders. They all left and settled on Henderson river, four miles northeast of the 'Lower Yellow Banks,' now Okawka, Henderson county, Ill.

"Later my father's family came and built a hewn log house at the creek, and at the west end of your town (Andalusia), in the fall of 1832. The logs used now form the west half of Henry Springer's residence, at Buffalo, having been transported on the ice (we really had ice in those days, when the old river was unspooled by the hands of men).

Only House in 35 Miles.

"At the time my father built, his was the only house between that of Joshua Vandufft, on Vandufft's island, at the foot of Black Hawk Tower, and Erastus Dennison, at the 'Upper Yellow Banks,' now New Boston, distant about 30 to 35 miles from each other.

"The next house was built by Hackley Sams, at Sulphur Springs, in the spring of 1834. Next was that of John Vanatta, during the fall of 1834, and afterwards bought by Jonathan Buford, and occupied by his family. Next came the place, one-half mile east of Dan and John Edgington came to the country and topped some time with my father, who went with them over to look at lands north of where Edgington now is, which they located, two remaining on the ground, while John Edgington went to Quincy on the little steamer 'Adventurer,' to enter their lands of the government.

"Later they all left for their home in Steubenville, Ohio, to return in the spring with their families. My father sent by them for 500 apple trees.

"In the spring of 1835 they chartered a boat on the Ohio river, bringing with them the elder McNutt, and his son John, a carpenter, Moses Titterton as well as Charles and two other brothers, with their families, also Charles and Harry Eberhart with their families and Adolph Dunlap who was a noted gunsmith. All of these proved excellent people, not a black sheep among them.

"A little later James Robinson came, then Parmenters settled just west of him, and here I will close this time, of thought, to give you more of the history of what is now Andalusia.

Andalusia's Beginning.

"My father, Capt. B. W. Clark entered, I think, 160 acres, part being the present town, and placed it under fence and plow. After looking the ground all over he established 'Clark ferry,' which became the most noted ferry above St. Louis, nearly all of the first settlers of Scott, Muscatine, Cedar and Linn counties crossing into Black Hawk's purchase here.

"Among these, we will name Edward Wright and family, whom we ferried over in 1836. I helped to do so myself. Mr. and Mrs. Wright were the grandparents of our worthy friend, and Supervising Secretary R. E. Reede who is present tonight, and is the descendant of worthy people.

"You will see that Monmouth is 40 miles due south and Dubuque 75 miles

due north, with no cross lots, and the ferry was below the mouth of Rock river, thus saving crossing Rock river and sloughs to reach Black Hawk's purchase.

"Father could have claimed where Davenport now is, below what is now Harrison street, the Le Claire reservation being above that. But why go there? Our country was more beautiful, better timber, with coal in sight in many of the creeks.

"We did our fencing with split rails for many years, no pine lumber being run down the river until many years later; no wire fencing. Thus our timber was in demand.

Might Have Been Capital.

"Buffalo would have been the county seat of Scott county had it not been for the trickery of the territorial legislature, in subdividing Des Moines county, throwing Buffalo only three miles from the Muscatine county line. My father after removing to Black Hawk's purchase in 1833, continued to run the ferry and about 1836 sold to Col. Stevenson, W. S. Hamilton and Mr. Whiteside, of Galena, Ill., his entire interest excepting the fraction lying in front of your town, and two lots lying where Frank Ely (I think) built his store, across the street and east of your city hall and the ferry franchise for \$17,000. These men with others bought part of the interest of Jonah Case and J. W. Spencer and laid out the town of Stevenson, afterwards Rock Island. They also laid out the town of Rockport, which ran east up to the Buffalo creek, west nearly one-half mile below the sulphur springs, south over the hills at least a mile from the river. They had it platted in a most gorgeous and attractive manner. They took the map to Washington city where they sold many thousands of dollars worth of town lots to Daniel Webster, Henry Clark, J. C. Calhoun, Gen. George W. Jones and others, none of whom ever saw the lots. Rockport died a natural death and after an uninterrupted sleep of many years, was sold for taxes, bought by Napoleon Bonaparte Buford, laid out in town lots, and named Andalusia. The younger people perhaps do not know whom the above named gentleman is, but old settlers remember him as a citizen of Rock Island.

"Col. Stevenson, Messrs. Hamilton and Whiteside joined with George Davenport and laid out a very large town site, where the town of Sears now is and called it Rock Island City, but this was neither a financial success nor a swindle for lack of purchasers of lots.

Gave Cemetery Site.

"Before selling his land at Andalusia my father gave sufficient ground for the cemetery in which the first burial was that of Giles Gabbert, son of Daniel Gabbert, whom my father had living there to run the ferry.

"This by omitting many items, brings us up to the days of Samuel Kenworthy, who came in 1841, and a little later Dr. Andrew Bowman and many others, that can tell you much better than I of more recent events.

"Before closing I am asked to state as a peculiar feature that during a long life, I have lived in the Louisiana purchase, state of Illinois, (I can almost say territory since the state is only four years older than myself). The territory of Michigan, now state territory of Wisconsin, now state territory of Minnesota, now state territory of Iowa, and only moved one mile. And I can add that I have a friend whose oldest son was born in Michigan territory, second in Wisconsin territory, third in Iowa territory, fourth in state of Iowa, all being born in the same log cabin. The name of my friend was 'Timber' Woods, of Burlington, Iowa."

Were Thrifty Tribe.

The Sacs and Foxes were industrious, for Indians, and unusually provident. From the Clark cabin to the mouth of Rock river was a cultivated field in which the squaws raised "squaw" corn, beans, etc. Until a few years ago in the unbroken pastures Capt. Clark stated he could find the hills in which the corn was planted, the ground being ridged up in working it. When the tribe went away on a hunt the greatest precautions were taken to prevent the Winnegobies from getting the corn and beans that had been harvested. To save this precious supply it was placed in sacks woven from the bark of the linn or basswood tree. Then holes four or five feet deep were dug in the ground, leaves were placed in the bottom and the sacks were put in. This was then covered with more leaves, brush and grass to keep the water from reaching the grain, then a thin layer of earth was placed on it and more leaves were scattered, the natural appearance of the surface being artificially produced with such nicety that the prying eyes of the Winnegobies were deceived.

EXPERIENCES WITH THE INDIANS

Only Indians Were Young Savages—Customs of Sacs and Foxes.

After the reading of the manuscript the speaker supplemented it with old reminiscences and answers to inquiries, bringing out things that the audience particularly wished to learn about. The mention of the name of an old resident was sufficient to bring forth experiences and anecdotes that were highly entertaining.

Among other things the manner in which the Clark family happened to come to Rock Island was told. It was the original intention to settle at Fort Edwards, as the site of the present town of Warsaw was then known. There the Clarks did stop and Capt. Benjamin Clark bought an interest in a herd of cattle which was pastured in the bottoms opposite Quincy. George Davenport, the Indian trader, who was at that time already located at Rock Island, learned of the elder Clark and engaged him to come up the river and cut some wild hay. The family was brought along on the trip and remained here from that time on.

The present Capt. Clark remembers distinctly when his father carried him from the gang plank of the small river steamer on which the trip was made and placed him down on shore in the midst of a crowd of a hundred Indians, who had gathered to see the boat land.

Only Indian Playmates.

Of the Indians were told many interesting things. In his boyhood Capt. Clark for a number of years had no playmates but the Indian children and with these he was on the best of terms. He learned their language and ran, swam, fished and hunted with them. One of his closest friends was Moses Keokuk, the chief who later attained considerable prominence when the tribe had been removed to Indian Territory. Late in life a correspondence was opened with Keokuk and photographs were exchanged. The likeness of his boyhood friend Capt. Clark prized among his most precious possessions till in a moment of weakness he yielded to the urgent request of an enterprising newspaper man and gave it up to have an engraving made. That was the last of it.

Another of his early friends among the Indians was one named Messico. He and Messico were chums. In the Black Hawk war Capt. Clark Sr. led a company of soldiers against the Sacs and Foxes and was the first to engage them at the battle of Wisconsin Heights. While the warriors were maneuvering to cover the retreat of their children and squaws Capt. Clark shot Messico. After the battle he approached the Indian and found that four bullets had penetrated his body. The wounds were fatal and the news of his death was one of the saddest messages that the younger Clark ever received.

When the Clark family lived on what is now Sylvan water in the vicinity of the Cable residence the Sacs and Foxes in the fall before starting out on their hunting expeditions would take their canoes around from Rock river and filling them with stones sink them in the slough near the cabin. This was done to hide them so that the Winnegobies, whom the captain describes as a thieving tribe, could not find them and take them away. The canoes were usually made of walnut logs hollowed out with fire. Occasionally a birch bark canoe from the north was found among them.

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